

32533 - Networking Communities (Autumn,2005)

Group3 Virtual World for Networking Communities (Workshop 3)

:: [Home](#) :: Workshop Presentation :: [Links to individual Website](#) :: [About Us](#)

Comparison and Analysis [Wednesday, 16 March, 2005]

Comparison	UTSOnline	BSCW	Livenet
1. Main use	<p>UTSOnline or Blackboard is a set of rich tools, functions that are designed for "Learning". It is suitable for group collaboration between staff (Lecturer, tutor) and student, and also between students themselves.</p> <p>Main uses: EXCELLENT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -All in one system administrator for students and staffs -Student can access to subjects which they enrolled, and get relevant course/subject information. -Rich tools for group collaboration such as file sharing, virtual classroom, discussion board etc. 	<p>BSCW (Basic Support for Cooperative Work) provides feature of collaboration with the idea of "shared workspace".</p> <p>Main uses: GOOD</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -D/L, U/L files to workspace. - Share information between workgroup. - Relevant event notification. - planning and organizing meetings. (using Calendar and Tasks) 	<p>Livenet provides "Electronic Workspaces" which can be customized as needed.</p> <p>Main uses: POOR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Workflow events. -Knowledge (documents, files, URL) sharing between group members. -Group discussion.
2. Primary users	<p>1.University</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Academic Provider such as Lecturer, Instructor, and Tutor. - Students. <p>(Example: UTS)</p>	<p>1. Companies that want to provide basic collaborative services to their employees. (Example: Emergency Management Australia)</p> <p>2. University (Example: University of Queensland, Victoria University of Technology)</p> <p>[ref: http://www.bscw.de/english/ref/ref2.html]</p>	<p>1. Group of student who wants to work in collaborative environment over internet.</p>
3. Skill level of user	<p>[Beginner to Intermediate]</p> <p>UTSOnline provides rich features which will take time for new user to get used to it.</p>	<p>[Beginner] Do not require much skill to use it.</p>	<p>[Beginner] Do not require much skill to use it.</p>

<p>4 .User interface</p>	<p>EXCELLENT, you can easily find your way, all the areas you can navigate are clearly shown by the buttons on the left side of the screen, which is a standard location of options. You can easily move from one section to another through the tabs. A course map is available for a quick view of the structure of the site. It's fast to navigate between pages because it does not use very much heavy graphics and also because the Home, Help, and Logout icons and section tabs are available in all of the pages. The icons are neatly designed and simple. The interface is well-designed using boxes to enclose texts and tools. The colors choices are good making it easier to read texts because it uses black or blue text on white background. There is a lot of white spaces, making it even easier to read.</p>	<p>The interface is GOOD and unfamiliar design, all the menu options are on top and you would think the icons underneath them represent them but they do not, they are different options. They are neatly designed however because the icons use the same color and style. The texts are readable because it uses a lot of white spaces. However, there are some pages that use backgrounds with bright colors such as orange and blue, making it distracting to read texts.</p>	<p>Interface is GOOD enough, the options are grouped properly on the left side of the screen. It's a bit uneasy to read all the available options and menu because the yellow background is a bit strong and distracting when reading the texts. It does not have a course map but you can easily navigate from one section to another because all the available options are on a fix location and appear on each page. It's also fast to navigate between pages because it also does not use very much heavy graphics. There's also a lot of white spaces on the text area so it's easier to read from there. However, some texts have varying sizes hence, making it a bit distracting to read.</p>
<p>5. Media support</p>	<p>POOR. No media support such as phone, camera or video conferencing.</p>	<p>EXCELLENT. Has support for video phone, camera or video conferencing thru NetMeeting, Netscape Conference Intel Internet VideoPhone, etc.</p>	<p>POOR. No media support such as phone, camera or video conferencing.</p>
<p>6. Interactivity</p>	<p>EXCELLENT. UTS online is interactive providing both asynchronous and synchronous communication through its discussion and announcement boards, email, and virtual classroom including chat.</p>	<p>GOOD. Like Livenet BSCW provides only asynchronous communication, allowing storage and retrieval of documents and sharing information within a group through workspaces. However, it has more features than LiveNet for interactivity such as support for threaded discussions, version management of documents, group management, search features and many more.</p>	<p>GOOD. Interaction is mainly asynchronous through its workspaces providing its participants with the information and tools needed to build relationships and carry out their work. Other than what's on the workspaces, the only other available communication is via email. There is no synchronous communication.</p>

<p>7. Tracking</p>	<p>Opinion1: It is EXCELLENT for administrator. UTSONLINE is created for academic purpose, therefore administrator can track what each student has been doing. However, it is bad for user since there is little authorization for them.</p> <p>Opinion2: UTSONline has a tracking mechanism which is only available to specific users such as administrators and lectures. This feature is not available to students.</p>	<p>Opinion1: It is GOOD for users, since the folders can have task lists and many BSCW objects have system defined attributes such as creation date or owner name.</p> <p>Opinion2: BSCW allows tracking of activities of each user through the tasks performed by each of them. These tasks are visible to others members.</p>	<p>Opinion1: It is GOOD for users, since they can assign role to person, authorize a person to access folder, create task force.</p> <p>Opinion2: Tracking of activities is available only via permissions.</p>
<p>8. Delivery platform</p>	<p>Opinion1: It provides platform independence since Web browsers are available for all commonly used system platform such as Windows, Macintosh OS, or Unix</p> <p>Opinion2: Internet based. Users must be connected to the internet to be able to access any UTSONline application.</p>	<p>Opinion1: It provides platform independence since Web browsers are available for all commonly used system platform, however if user want to own your own server, it works on most Unix systems, Windows NT and Windows 2000</p> <p>Opinion2: Internet based. However some activities are also available on stand alone mode. So the users can perform tasks on their own PCs without having to connect to the internet. On the other hand to be able to communicate with other members they must be online.</p>	<p>Opinion1: It provides platform independence since Web browsers are available for all commonly used system platform such as Windows, Macintosh OS, or Unix</p> <p>Opinion2: Internet based. Users must be connected to the internet to be able to access any Livenet application.</p>
<p>9. File management system</p>	<p>GOOD, UTSONLINE provide menu for user to transfer file to each other by file exchange option. However, the file that is posted on webpage can only edit by user who pose it. Other person can just only open the file with out any modification</p>	<p>EXCELLENT, it provide more flexible file management system than UTSONLINE because all of group member can modify or remove the file that posed in group website, moreover user can post and transfer file to other member easier than uts online.</p>	<p>EXCELLENT, its performance is similar to BSCW. User who gets permission from administrator can modify the file the group member posted in website. Although it leads to complicated task for user, they can use file management more efficient.</p>
<p>10. Community building tools</p>	<p>GOOD, it provides both synchronized and asynchronized communication. Moreover, user can also transfer file by using file exchange menu and communicate with other member via discussion and e-mail menu.</p>	<p>EXCELLENT, apart of basic tools, it also provide more tool for example Calender and task menu to let all user know the duty for each member which is really helpful to complete the whole task of group.</p>	<p>POOR, it is very complicated for user to use this tools since they have to get the permission from administrator first, furthermore, it provide less tools(document, discussion, action) than other communication mechanism.</p>

<p>11. Flexibility</p>	<p>EXCELLENT. In term of software, Blackboard is consisted of multiple modules which can be add/upgrade or delete depends on the use. [Ref: http://www.blackboard.com/] In term of ease of use, Blackboard provides rich functions and features with high flexibility. Users can convey information in both asynchronous and synchronous communication such as discussion board, virtual room, etc.</p>	<p>GOOD. Due to less functionality compared to Blackboard, BSCW has less flexibility in term of ease of use and the system supports only asynchronous communication.</p>	<p>POOR. Livenet provides least functionality compared to Blackboard and BSCW. This is due to limited function provided by software.</p>
<p>12. Security</p>	<p>EXCELLENT. Different type of users has different privilege. For example, staffs are allowed to add delete student into/from course/subject and has a full control of information posted on website.</p>	<p>GOOD. Users are bounded by group of known member in address book. Information is shared to others by selecting list of other members in address book. Users who do not receive invitation for certain event or not being recognized as member are not allowed in participation.</p>	<p>EXCELLENT. Users are limited to access only to Workspaces in which they register, more than one workspace can be joined, but one at a time. Role based Security system is implemented. This allows owner of the workspace to permit certain actions to each role which will then assign to each member.</p>
<p>13. Customisation</p>	<p>GOOD, as it provide some choices for the layout and selected module display to be displayed in the Main Page.</p> <p>Below are some of the functions:</p> <p>Page Layout: User can define the Right and left panel, furthermore can move the modules from top to bottom.</p> <p>Theme: User can choose the Theme that they like.</p> <p>Modules: User can select some modules to display in the Main Page.</p>	<p>EXCELLENT, Provide lot of function that user can customise them own Main Page.</p> <p>Below are some of the functions:</p> <p>Calendar: User can choose the colour of the calendar</p> <p>Shortcut: user can choose for display some shortcut below the Menu Bar.</p> <p>Columns: From the Main page, user can choose the column type to be displayed, for example info, size, share, rating, status, deadline and etc, from the 'View' list in Menu Bar.</p> <p>Scale: User can choose different font size from the 'View' list in Menu Bar.</p> <p>Sort: From Main page, user can sort the list by some option, for example: Name, Type, Size, Rating and etc.</p> <p>Description: From the Main page, User can choose to display the description or not.</p> <p>Calender Filter: In Calendar, User can filter by some optional from the 'View' list in Menu Bar.</p>	<p>POOR, because No Theme , layout colour, scale, shortcut for user chosen.</p>

**14.
Collaboration**

EXCELLENT, for **email**, user needn't remember the recipient's mail address by tick the checkbox beside the name. Provide the **virtual classroom** to let student communicate each other in

GOOD, provide more function than Livenet, such as **sharing notes, URLs, tasks** and etc.,

Average, provide normal function such as **mail sending** and **file exchange**.

Copyright 2004-2005. Allrights reserved. virtualworld32533@yahoo.com